



United States  
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Agriculture

Animal and  
Plant Health  
Inspection  
Service

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## WILDLIFE SERVICES—ILLINOIS

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### USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in Illinois

Every day, residents, industries, organizations and agencies call on Illinois Wildlife Services (WS) for help in protecting agriculture, human health and safety, natural resources, and property from damage or threats posed by wildlife. WS' professional wildlife biologists and specialists respond with effective, selective, and humane strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts.

WS works to protect property and reduce wildlife threats to human health and safety at airports, on public land, and on private property. The program also protects people,

pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases; guards natural resources from wildlife damage; and educates the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management. Specific projects of Illinois WS include identifying and implementing management strategies at airports and assisting State agencies with monitoring for wildlife diseases that threaten public health (e.g., rabies), natural resources, and agricultural interests (e.g., pseudorabies). WS helps manage the Chicago-area deer populations to protect public and private property, threatened native vegetation, and human safety at risk from deer/vehicle collisions.



A member of the Illinois Veterinary Emergency Response Team, WS participates in tabletop exercises with Federal, State, and local government agencies, veterinarians, zoos, landowners, and others to prepare for emergency animal disease outbreaks in Illinois. Recent exercises concerned H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) and other diseases.

#### Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting airline passengers and aircraft operations from wildlife hazards at airports
- Protecting public safety and property from Canada goose and white-tailed deer damage
- Protecting native vegetation and threatened and endangered species from white-tailed deer damage
- Protecting agricultural resources and public health and safety from disease threats (e.g., West Nile virus, histoplasmosis, rabies, and HPAI) and other damage/threats
- Protecting property, agricultural resources, and natural resources from beaver damage

#### Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to Illinois:

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aircraft and human safety
- Managing bird damage to agricultural resources, property, public health and public safety
- Increasing knowledge of wildlife vectors of rabies, chronic wasting disease, classical swine fever, and pseudorabies
- Managing conflicts with Canada geese and white-tailed deer in urban environments
- Managing beaver damage to property and agricultural and natural resources

### Applying Science & Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

WS offers information, advice, equipment, and materials that enable many people to resolve wildlife conflicts on their own. Often, this *technical assistance* can be provided over the telephone. WS also provides on-site expertise, or *direct assistance*, to manage complex wildlife problems that cannot be safely resolved by others. To support this effort, WS conducts *scientific research* across the Nation to develop answers to new problems posed by wildlife and to ensure the program benefits from the latest science and technology.

#### Protecting Agricultural Resources—WS

works with the agricultural industry to resolve conflicts caused by wildlife including bird damage to crops, dairies, and feedlots. Although often localized, such conflicts can significantly impact producers. Birds can destroy a corn crop, spread disease in feedlots, and significantly decrease milk production. WS works with the Illinois Departments of Agriculture and of Natural Resources, and USDA's Cooperative Extension Service to identify and resolve wildlife conflicts with agricultural resources.

#### Wildlife Hazard Management at Airports—

Wildlife-aircraft collisions cost U.S. civil aviation more than \$550 million annually and pose hazards to flight crews and passengers. From 1990 to 2006, more than 3,400 wildlife strikes, involving 78 species, occurred at Illinois airports according to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reports. WS' National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) studies methods to reduce wildlife hazards to aircraft and the public. Illinois WS biologists collaborate with NWRC scientists to evaluate how new methods of managing airport habitats affect wildlife abundance. NWRC maintains the National Wildlife Strike Database to monitor trends and wildlife species posing the greatest concern to aviation safety.

WS biologists work with all major Chicago airports and State airports to manage hazardous populations on and near airfields. Habitat manipulation, which made

airports less attractive to wildlife, has greatly reduced collision rates with specific species. Nearly 800 raptors have been captured and relocated 50 to 200 miles away from Chicago's O'Hare and Midway airports, greatly reducing their threat. WS works with other airport managers and the Illinois Department of Transportation to assess and resolve conflicts at airports throughout the State. Wildlife hazard assessments are conducted to help identify potential wildlife risks to safety and strategies to resolve conflicts.

**Urban and Rural Human Health and Safety Issues**—WS works with private industries and the Illinois Department of Public Health to alleviate disease threats to public health and safety. For example, large concentrations of European starlings or other birds may create environmental conditions conducive to histoplasmosis, a fungal disease, in industrial or residential areas where exposed humans can develop severe respiratory problems. WS also assists in monitoring for wildlife diseases including rabies, West Nile virus, and HPAI. As part of this effort, WS assists to alleviate public exposure concerns and to respond to reports of dead birds found by the public.

**Chronic Wasting Disease**—WS cooperates with the U.S. Department of Energy, the Illinois Departments of Natural Resources and of Agriculture, local governments, and airports to develop and implement chronic wasting disease (CWD) surveillance and management programs to eliminate this disease threat to natural and agricultural resources in northern Illinois. To facilitate testing, WS collects biological samples from wild deer taken during cooperative deer damage management programs.

**Avian Influenza Surveillance**—HPAI spread rapidly from Asia to Europe, raising concern that the disease could be carried by migratory birds and introduced into North

America. WS worked with several State and Federal agencies (e.g., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), local government, universities, and hunting organizations to protect domestic animals, wildlife and humans from this potential disease threat.

WS conducted statewide surveillance as part of the Interagency National Strategic Plan for the Early Detection of H5N1 HPAI in Wild Migratory Birds and as a part of a Mississippi flyway surveillance plan. WS collected samples from live wild waterfowl and shorebirds, hunter-harvested waterfowl, birds at morbidity and mortality events, and those captured or removed during damage management operations. WS also collected fecal samples for environmental surveillance. As of early 2007, the Asian H5N1 HPAI strain had not been detected in North America.

**Beaver Damage Management**—WS responds to ever-increasing reports of beaver damage to property, agriculture, and natural resources. Beaver represent a valuable and integral natural and environmental resource. Limited sport trapping, due to a decline in the fur market, has contributed to rising populations and a corresponding increase in damage caused by beaver, which now occupy nearly all State watersheds. While this population escalation has some benefits, such as reduced downstream sedimentation and improved water quality, detrimental impacts have also increased. Typical requests for WS assistance involve damage to agricultural and forest resources, natural resources, and flooding of homes. To resolve such problems, WS works closely with the property owners or administrators to identify effective and responsible mitigation measures. For instance, WS has worked with the U.S. Forest Service in southern Illinois using pond levelers to resolve a flooding problem. These help maintain beaver pond levels minimizing the chances of flooding damage while allowing beaver to use the watershed. When beaver populations are excessive, population management may be used. Occasionally explosives are used to remove dams that are flooding property. Illinois WS personnel are trained and certified in the safe and effective use and storage of explosives.

#### Major Cooperators:

- City of Chicago (O'Hare International and Midway Airports)
- U.S. Department of Energy – Fermi National Accelerator and Argonne National Laboratories
- USDA Forest Service
- Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics
- Forest Preserve Districts of Cook, Lake DuPage Counties

## Looking to the Future

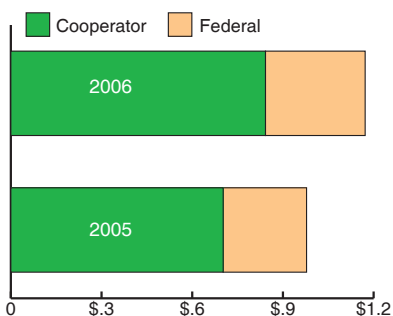
Illinois WS provides safe, effective and humane assistance for diverse wildlife conflicts, but the need continues to increase. Public safety concerns wildlife managers, particularly at airports, as does surveillance and response to wildlife-borne diseases.

Additionally, WS will be cooperating with APHIS-Veterinary Services, the Illinois Departments of Agriculture and of Natural Resources, and participating landowners to conduct surveillance in wild pigs for classical swine fever, brucellosis, and pseudorabies, to protect the swine industry, one of Illinois' major economic resources. WS will conduct the surveillance to assist the State in maintaining its Class V-pseudorabies-free status.

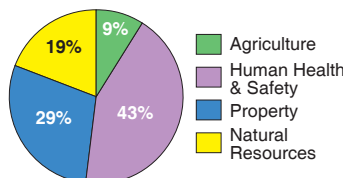
## Illinois Wildlife Services Funding

WS receives federally allocated funds, which are utilized to assist in managing conflicts with starlings and blackbirds, wildlife diseases, and identifying wildlife hazards at airports. Additionally, WS receives money from cooperators who have a vested interest in the program such as agricultural producers, private individuals, businesses, and other Federal, State, and local government agencies. These cooperators have sought WS assistance in resolving their wildlife-related conflicts because of the effective and professional assistance provided by WS personnel.

Total Funding (Millions)



Resources Protected FY 06 % of Total Funds



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